6. WHERE DO LEAF WARBLERS (*PHYLLOSCOPI*) SLEEP?

I noticed the other day how the *Phylloscopi* spent their nights when wintering in these parts. They seem to roost singly under the fronds of papaya trees (*Carica papaya*) for preference. I had observed one bird regularly settling for the night in this manner some years ago at Trivandrum. Now I have noticed the same thing happening here also. There is a papaya tree near my gate which one *Phylloscopus* (with a yellow supercilium and yellowish wing band, and calling *tsit-chew*) is visiting every evening to roost in. I believe it must be the same bird as it comes every evening just before sundown and makes its bed under the same leaf.

STATE MUSEUM AND ZOO,
TRICHUR, N. G. PILLAI
KERALA,
December 23, 1959.

[The *Phylloscopus* above could be either the Greenish Leaf Warbler (*P. trochiloides nitidus*) or the Largebilled (*P. magnirostris*), both of which broadly answer to the description. The former is the commoner of the two in the low country of Kerala.—EDS.]

7. A NEW RACE OF FINN'S BAYA, *PLOCEUS MEGARHYNCHUS* HUME

In 1954 (*J. Bombay nat. Hist. Soc.* **52** : 599-601) I compared a series of Finn's Bayas (*Ploceus megarhynchus* Hume, 1869) obtained in captivity and said to be from the Himalayan foothills in Kumaon in western Uttar Pradesh, with specimens collected in a wild state in the Bhutan Duars and in Assam. Though the differences appeared to be of subspecific value, I did not name them, as one group consisted entirely of cage birds whose origin could not be determined with certainty.

Last year Drs. Sálim Ali and J. H. Crook revisited the Rampur and Haldwani districts of Kumaon (U.P.) and discovered large numbers of *Ploceus megarhynchus* breeding in that area (*J. Bombay nat. Hist. Soc.* **56** : 457-483). The specimens which they brought back agreed with the cage birds, and a comparison with six more specimens collected by Koelz from Agia near Goalpara in Assam (very kindly lent by the Museum of Zoology, University of Michigan)

prompts me to reiterate the differences between the typical form of the west and those obtained in the east:

WESTERN MALES COLLECTED BETWEEN 9TH MAY AND 20TH AUGUST (9 SPECIMENS)	EASTERN MALES COLLECTED BETWEEN 2ND MAY AND 8TH JUNE (6 SPECIMENS)
(*a*) The yellow forehead extends over 26-29 mm., averaging 27 mm.	(*a*) The yellow forehead extends over 18-26 mm., averaging 20 mm., in length,
This difference may have been accentuated to some extent by the method of preparation involving stretching or telescoping of the skin.	
(*b*) The yellow on the head is richer than that on the breast and matches that of *Ploceus philippinus*. Two first year birds (?) have their heads brownish and washed with yellow as in females.	(*b*) The colour of the head is a purer yellow.
(*c*) All have bright yellow or traces of yellow on the rump to a varying extent. Some have exceptionally large patches extending from the lower back to the tips of the upper tail-coverts. In one wild bird there is a suggestion of this being continuous with the yellow of the head (BNHS 20172).	(*c*) One (with testes 10 mm.) has the upper tail-coverts yellow (Michigan Museum 147925 dated 8th June), but others including specimens marked 'Nesting' (2nd May) show very slight or no trace of yellow.
(*d*) The yellow on the under-parts extends from the chin to the vent and includes the thighs and the under tail-coverts. This is noticeable in the colour plate accompanying Finn's description of *P. rutledgii*, *Ibis*, 1903, p. 32. None in breeding plumage shows any white on the belly.	(*d*) In none does the yellow extend to the under tail-coverts, which are white. and in four the lower belly is also white.

WESTERN FEMALES COLLECTED ON 15TH JANUARY, 10TH JULY, 6TH AND 8TH AUGUST, 12TH SEPTEMBER AND 8TH OCTOBER (6 SPECIMENS)	EASTERN FEMALES COLLECTED ON 25TH MAY (2 SPECIMENS)
(*a*) All are yellow from chin to under tail-coverts though paler than in the male and of varying intensity.	(*a*) In the two females collected by O'Donel on the 25th May in one the yellow is restricted to the chin and upper breast, while in the other it goes down to the abdomen, but does not extend to the lower belly and the under tail-coverts. This was the bird available to Whistler and termed a 'particularly vigorous female of *Ploceus burmanicus*.

These differences, which in general were accepted by Drs. Sálim Ali and B. Biswas who have examined the material, are, I think, sufficient to warrant a separation, and I hereby name the BNHS specimen No. 6933 (male) collected by O'Donel in the Bhutan Duars on 25th May 1912 as the type of

Ploceus megarhynchus sálimalii subsp. nov.

in recognition of the interest Dr. Sálim Ali has always shown in this

elusive species, which interest really induced me to examine the cage birds and enquire into their plumages.

Drs. Sálim Ali and J. H. Crook have drawn attention to the extraordinary nesting habits of the western subspecies, namely that it builds nests high up in trees with entrances at the side rather than hanging nests as do the other weaver birds in India. Stuart Baker in NIDIFICATION 3 : 4 says that O'Donel in his letters to him stated that he 'had discovered the colony in a vast area of grass more or less intermixed with scrub and the nests were untidy balls of grass strips far more like the nests of *Ploceus manyar* than those of *philippinus*, and that none of them had tubular entrances. The nests were larger than those of *manyar* and were fixed to the stems of the grass, generally several of these, loosely and carelessly put together with no lining. The colony consisted of at least 20 birds but seems to have been rather scattered.'

Several of the specimens collected by Koelz are marked 'Nesting' but it has not been possible to ascertain if the nests were in grass or in trees. O'Donel's note however seems to be fairly specific that the nests were attached to grass, and though there is no evidence that O'Donel found either eggs or young in the nests, he appears to have examined completed nests. Considering that the type referred to above is in what appears to be full breeding plumage, it is unlikely that he was referring to the doodling nests in grass mentioned by Drs. Sálim Ali and Crook. Also, having once found such nests he could hardly have overlooked the very conspicuous clusters in the trees. If this difference in nesting habits is confirmed it would be an exceedingly interesting variation in habits between geographical races.

Another interesting point which requires clarification is the significance of the prominent brown collar across the upper breast, completely visible only in one cage bird dated 20th August but traces of which are visible in all the males in yellow—apparently it disappears in off plumage. Dr. Sálim Ali failed to see any individuals with such complete collars and the data available suggest that this occurs either sporadically in a few individuals or is acquired after breeding. Traces of these spots and bands are visible in females of both groups.

The eastern male dated 31st March has a tiny patch of yellow on the forehead and another on the chin. The label is marked 'Testes 5 mm.'. A female dated 30th March is very similar, except that it has no yellow other than a very faint suggestion on the chin. These

two are otherwise in off plumage, with no yellow, and very similar to each other.

Dr. Sálim Ali was informed that this species bred twice a year, in July and again in September.

Much work still remains to be done on the races of this very interesting species.

BOMBAY NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY,
91, WALKESHWAR ROAD, HUMAYUN ABDULALI
BOMBAY 6,
October 27, 1960.

8. THE BLACKBACKED WOODPECKER, *CHRYSOCOLAPTES FESTIVUS* (BODDAERT), IN GANJAM, ORISSA

During the summer of 1947, a pair of Blackbacked Woodpeckers [*Chrysocolaptes festivus* (Boddaert)] aroused interest by their continual loud rattling laugh as they chased each other up the boles of tall trees standing on a flat streamside plain in dense moist deciduous forest in Coupe No. 1 Baliguda Reserve Forest, nearest village Durgapunga, 18 miles from Muniguda railway station on the Raipur-Vaisakhapatanam line. A search finally discovered their nest, situated 30 feet (*c.* 9 m.) above the ground in the trunk of a semi-decayed *Shorea robusta*, marked for felling, growing in shady forest of the same species of tree along the banks of a small stream. The young were allowed to fly—only two young emerged—before we felled the tree.

GUDUR (NELLORE),
S. INDIA, K. M. KIRKPATRICK
October 31, 1960.

[The few nesting records from Kanara (Davidson), Nilgiris (Howard Campbell), and Travancore (Stewart) refer to one egg only, though in Ceylon (subsp. *tantus* Ripley) Wait says they lay one to three eggs.—EDS.]

9. THE IMPERIAL GREEN PIGEON, *MUSCADIVORA AENEA* (LINNAEUS), ON SALT-LICKS IN ORISSA

The forest country between Durgapunga in Baliguda, Ganjam, and Panjama, in northern Jeypore Samasthanam, Orissa, is a poor stag-headed Moist Deciduous Champion type 3/B, growing over a